MINUTES DRAFT 2 - 5/06/03

Orange County TMDL project, SAG Meeting #1
Sabine River Authority HQ, Orange, Texas
Tuesday, April 22, 2002, 10:30 am — 1:30 pm

Welcome (Miles Hall, Sabine River Authority)

Meeting Overview (Linda Fernandez, Fernandez Group, Inc.)
Points Covered

- project team, Stakeholders Advisory Group (SAG), and Technical Advisory Group (TAG)
- round-table introduction (see attached attendees list)
- why we're here: exchange information, encourage participation, make decisions
- how SAG works together: structural considerations, participatory mechanisms, rules of order
- when SAG will meet: milestones in TMDL process and/or regular intervals

Discussion Items
The first discussion point regarded group structure: whether officers, chairs, etc., were needed. Gerard Sala and Miles Hall, both of SRA, pointed out that a facilitator would be present at every SAG meeting and that SRA would continue to handle logistics, such as arranging for a meeting place and copying relevant documents for SAG members. The consensus was to follow an informal, non-hierarchal structure at these initial stages of the project.

Members also asked whether the SAG would have the capacity to direct the project, i.e., the power to accept or reject a TMDL report or implementation plan. Ward Ling (TCEQ) explained that although the SAG has no formal "veto" power, the TCEQ recognizes that a plan rejected by a majority of SAG members would be unworkable. Input from SAG members will be taken very seriously. Mr. Ling noted that the actual TMDL report is subject to EPA approval, and that he expects and hopes the SAG will take a very active role in participation leading to that stage. Linda Fernandez added that, ideally, the SAG's input will directly drive the contents of the TDML report, so the most desirable course of action is to find ways of working on water quality without overburdening stakeholder group members.

The second discussion item concerned the process for approving minutes. Mr. Ling explained that on other TMDL projects, minutes are posted on the project Web page on the TCEQ Website, and SAG members may use e-mail to indicate whether they approve the minutes or not. The group ultimately decided that SRA would e-mail the minutes for the first meeting to all members along with a survey as to their future preferences for approving minutes by reviewing the drafts online or by direct e-mail.

The third discussion item pertained to attendance requirements for SAG meetings. Members agreed to a suggestion to list official alternates.

The final discussion item for this segment of the meeting regarded the frequency of meetings. Ms. Fernandez noted that the group is required to meet at various milestones of the TMDL project but that the SAG may choose to meet more often. Mr. Hall suggested a minimum of two meetings a year to keep members informed and to provide continuing information and education on technical issues that might be outside the expertise of many SAG members. SAG members opted for quarterly meetings.

The group also discussed whether limited travel budgets would keep state agency representatives from attending meetings. One suggestion was to explore video- or teleconferencing options for including representatives unable to attend in person.

Following a comment that mid-day meetings were inconvenient for some members, the SAG agreed to schedule some meetings for early morning or late afternoon/evening.

Project Overview (Ward Ling, TCEQ)
Points Covered

- project background
- milestones completed
- project organization
- historical data review
- model selection
- current tasks underway
- next step
- probable results of project

Discussion Items
Are there differing responsibilities among the project team members for actual water sample analysis and for data analysis?
SRA and Parsons Engineering both will do sample collection and analysis. Parsons will handle all the data analysis for data collected in the water sampling process.

Is the Historical Data Review completed?
Yes. An extensive report, including a two-page executive summary, is available on the TCEQ project website for this TMDL.

Are the historical data being used in the TMDL model?
The historical data have been reviewed and considered; at this stage, only new, verified, data will be used, due to model requirements.

How many data points are necessary for the selected model?
The model template requires about 8 stormwater, 17 sediment oxygen demand, 21 effluent, and 30 ambient water quality stations. Additional information on this topic was provided in the following presentation by Parsons Engineering.

What is a QAPP?
QAPP stands for Quality Assurance Project Plan. It is the document that defines the steps taken to ensure data are collected and analyzed according to set standards. The QAPP for the project must be approved by EPA before sampling and analysis begin.

How long does that approval take?
EPA is required to provide its response to a submitted QAPP within 60 days; it usually takes around 30 days.

Project Presentation (Kirk Dean, Parsons Engineering)
Points Covered

- project scope
- list of 2002 impaired water bodies included in this project
- explanation of impairments and water quality standards criteria
- prior studies of Adams and Cow bayous
- dissolved oxygen hypothesis

- E. coli/fecal coliform hypothesis
- pH hypothesis
- model selection/types of models
- sampling plan
- project scope review

Discussion Items

Are the oxygen requirements of aquatic animals considered insignificant compared to the other oxygen requirements in the bayous?

Yes. In addition, oxygen is less soluble in salt water; thus the lower standards for dissolved oxygen in the tidal (brackish) segments.

Regarding a note in the presentation about Terry Gully: can you define the term "intermittent streams with perennial pools"?

An intermittent stream is a stream that has a period of zero flow for at least one week during most years. Where flow records are available, a stream with a 7Q2 flow of less than 0.1ft3/s is considered intermittent. An intermittent stream with perennial pools is a stream that maintains persistent pools even when flow in the stream is less than 0.1 ft3/s.

Can a stream be considered intermittent if water is present but there is no flow?

Possibly. This is a very complicated question, as tidally influenced water bodies can have flows in opposite directions at different depths, or no measurable flow at all. Flows will be measured with extremely sensitive instruments so as to make the most accurate determinations possible of flow conditions as necessary for the project.

Dr. Patricia Radloff, from Texas Parks & Wildlife Department (TPWD), noted that TPWD, TCEQ, and USGS have formed an interagency workgroup to study intermittent flow conditions and perennial pools in various Texas water bodies in order to more fully develop the definition of an intermittent stream.

Have peak exceedances of water quality standards in the bayous been correlated with land uses?

Partially. To an extent, SRA looked at this issue in special studies on Cow and Adams bayous in 1999. This will be more thoroughly investigated in the TMDL project.

Will sampling, and the TMDL model, include the oxbows on the bayous?

The model will address the oxbows if a simpler model does not work satisfactorily. Data for the more complicated model that includes oxbow conditions will be collected. Additionally, a TPWD Use Attainability Analysis will focus on the oxbows.

Water quality problems are indicated at points well above the point of tidal influence. Is the model broad enough to include this situation?

Yes, although the more complicated "3-dimensional" approach will not be required for portions above the point of saltwater influence.

Water Quality Issues in Southeast Texas Streams (Miles Hall, SRA)

Points Covered

- standards & designated uses
- standards & measurement criteria
- summary of point & nonpoint sources in the Adams & Cow bayou systems
- manmade impacts on water quality
    - channelization
    - destruction of wetlands
    - permitted discharges

    - nonpoint source pollution
- possible remedies
    - waste load reduction of point & nonpoint sources
    - wetlands restorations

Discussion Items

The Orange County Drainage District is working on retention ponds for Adams Bayou overflows. What impact might these have on the TMDL project?

Further details about the plans are necessary to answer the question. The plans to construct these ponds are very preliminary at this point.

Wrap-Up

The SAG agreed that meetings should include updates on the status of the project and technical presentations on issues of concern.

The next SAG meeting was scheduled for Tuesday, July 29, 2pm-5pm, at the Sabine River Authority offices in Orange.

Project status topics will include specifics on the sampling plan and QAPP approval.

Technical presentations will focus on nonpoint source pollution issues.

The SAG also asked for hand-outs on water quality terminology (acronyms and definitions), a land use map with projections for future development, a map with project sampling sites, and copies of SRA's point source schematics.